

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH QUALITY ADMINISTRATION AMONG PRINCIPALS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the factors associated with quality administration among principals in Enugu State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population for the study comprised all the 12,025 teachers and 240,500 students in Enugu State. Cluster sampling technique was adopted. The sample of the study comprised of 600 teachers and 180 students. Questionnaire containing 20 items was the instrument for data collection. Mean ratings and z-test were used in answering the research questions and testing the null hypotheses respectively. The findings of the study revealed that with regard to personal and professional qualities expected of the principals, the respondents agreed that they include attestable moral character, good sense of humor, among others. With regards to desirable qualities expected by principals in the area of financial management, the respondents indicated their admiration of principals who are prudent in financial management, who can run a school within budgetary limitations, among others. The recommendations include: school principals should undergo special training on leadership, be exposed to seminars, workshops and symposia, receive special training on financial management with regard to school setting among others.

KEYWORDS: Factors, Quality, Administration, Principal, Secondary Schools

INTRODUCTION

The performance of secondary school students at senior school certificate examinations in Enugu state of Nigeria has been causing some concern to parents, staff as well as the government. This has been particularly disturbing as it is believed that the much-talked-about national education objectives cannot be realized without considerable improvements on the present students' performance in senior school certificate examinations. The poor performance may not be unconnected with the quality of administration in the schools.

Ogbonnaya (2003) sees quality administration as a process which entails maximum utilization of human, financial and material resources for the realization of set organizational goals. According to Peretemode (1996), quality administration is concerned with the performance of executive duties, the carrying out of policies and decisions to fulfill a purpose of day-to-day running of an organization. Administrative qualities can be described as acts that affect others.

The main objectives of the secondary education in Nigeria as contained in the nation's National Policy on Education include: To develop the personal capacity of individuals, to prepare pupils for the world of work, and to prepare pupils for the next stage of education (FRN, 2004). However, rather than focusing on achieving the objectives students appear to be inclined to social vices which constitute worry to parents and the society at large. Coombs (1999) remarked of students and young peoples' vices of vandalization, robbery, pick-pocketing and tuggery. According to him, there is mass

disregard and disrespect for elders and those in position of authority, and for work among the products of our school system. All these negative vices point to the fact that the area of moral and socialization in the school system has failed. Obemeata (2000) reported that there has been a sharp decline in the academic performance at various levels of educational system in Nigeria, especially at the senior school certificate examinations. The decline has been attributed largely to the poor quality administration among the principals of secondary schools. Akinwuni and Ayeni (2003) observed that there has been an upsurge in the number of both public and privately owned secondary schools accompanied with gross lack of qualitative and experienced administrative personnel as principals; lack of modern instructional technologies; poor physical classroom condition; and lack of adequate training programme for teachers. Yet, as a third world nation, Nigeria aspires to attain high level in the social, political, economic and technological sphere through a well articulated and functional system of education. In line with this Omata (2004) opined that effective administration is the hub around which the wheel of such attainment revolves. It is in recognition of this view that Nigeria's National Policy on Education, which emphasizes functional education and self-reliance, stresses the desirability for effective leadership in schools. According to the policy document "Government will work towards improving the quality of secondary school education by giving support to measures that will ensure effective administration. These will include the selection of" the right caliber of people for principalship of schools" (FRN 2004: p 20).

The principal as the chief executive of the school is in a position where he exercises influence and leadership authority over his staff and students. The principal's administrative qualities (leadership styles) affects attitudes, the social climate, morale, progress, co-operation and direction of efforts in the school. From the above, it is obvious that principal's administrative qualities cannot be separated from the behavior of staff and students. This is so because administrative qualities are relational attribute which emphasizes the behavior of the person leading in terms of the behavior of the persons being led. Igwe, Nosiri, Okeke, Elele and Ozurumba (2000) stated that administration is essentially a way of working with people and materials to accomplish the purpose of an enterprise. According to Akubue (1996), administration is a method where a group of people at the highest level of an organization plan, organize, communicate, coordinate, control and direct the actions and activities of people who work for the organizational objectives.

In studying the principal's administrative qualities emphasis is on the behavior of the principal vis-à-vis finance, staff, students, the community and even that of the supervising agency and Ministry of Education, that is, how the subordinate perceive his behavior rather than how he behaves. It is this perception that influences subordinates' action. One of the factors that influence staff productivity and consequently students' performance is the administrative qualities of the school principals with whom the staff work. The quality of leadership in an organization be it religious, political, social, business, military or otherwise, affects, to a large extent, the success or failure of that organization. While most staff prefer to work under democratic principals, others choose the laissez-faire leader, and a few prefer autocratic leadership style (Dijeh, 1990).

Another crucial area is how the school fund is handled. How the principal handles school funds receives the attention of all stakeholders. This is because fund is the hub on which the day-to-day operation of the school revolves so that its management attracts attention of most people. Ogbonnaya (2013) observed that financial management includes preparing the school budget, administering school purchases, accounting for school monies and property, providing for a system of internal accounting. Financial management refers to that phase of school administration that is primarily concerned with procuring, expending, accounting, organizing and maintaining fiscal and material resources in an effective

manner (Mgbodile, 2004). Ogonnaya (2013) posited that some of the financial management qualities expected of principals include: evidence of prudence and ability to run the institution within the budgetary limitation, readiness to release money for purchase of school equipment and making use of payment vouchers in all financial transactions.

Nigerian society demands high quality education for its citizens. If all the factor resources for the achievement of such laudable goal become readily available but the staff and students exhibits lackadaisical attitude, then the achievement of such objective will remain a wishful thinking. No principal can work in isolation. He needs the cooperation of his staff, students and the community. The extent to which he will elicit their cooperation and assistance depends on his administrative qualities which is the focus of this study. The school climate is created by the administrative qualities of the principal. In some schools the climate is conducive and amiable while in others it is unpleasant and hostile. These differences account for differences in attitude to work, effectiveness, efficiency and productivity of school principals.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are personal and professional qualities expected of principals in staff and student personnel management?
- What are desirable qualities expected of principals in financial management?

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the research study:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of staff and students with regard to personnel and professional qualities of principals in the area of personnel administration.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of staff and students with regard to administrative qualities of principals in the area of financial management.

METHODS

Descriptive survey design was employed in this study. It was used in this study to describe the factors associated with quality administration among principals of secondary schools in Enugu State.

The study covered Enugu state of Nigeria. Enugu State has six (6) Education zones: Agbani, Awgu, Enugu, Nsukka, Obollo-Afor, and Udi.

The population for the study comprised all the 12,025 secondary school teachers and the 240,500 secondary school students all in the 278 secondary schools in Enugu State (Source: Post Primary School Management Board, (PPSMB) Enugu 2014).

Cluster sampling technique was adopted, because of the large population of the subjects and large geographical area to be covered. 780 respondents, made up of 600 teachers and 180 students, were used for the study.

The instrument the researchers used for data collection was Principals' Quality Administration Assessment Scale (PQAAS). The instrument was developed by the researchers. It is in four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points) and Strongly Disagree (1 point). The instrument has two sections; Section A which dealt with personal data of the respondents and section B which contains two clusters with 22 items on administrative

behaviours of principals.

To ensure the face validity of the instrument, the initial draft of the questionnaire was given to two experts in Educational Administration and Planning, and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation. They were requested to study the items and assess the suitability of the language, the adequacy and relevance of the items in addressing the research questions, bearing in mind the purpose of the study. Their corrections and comments were used to modify the questionnaire. The modification gave rise to the final draft which was produced and administered on the respondents.

In order to ensure the reliability of the instrument a test re-test was carried out in six secondary schools in the six Education zones of the state, using five teachers and six students from each of the six schools which were not selected for the actual study. After two weeks intervals, the same instrument was re-administered to the same subjects. Using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, the test-retest reliability index was calculated and it yielded 0.75. This indicated that the instrument is reliable.

The instrument was administered to the teachers and students through the direct delivery and retrieval method. This enabled the researchers to achieve 100% return of the distributed questionnaire.

Mean scores and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions. The cut-off point was 2.50. Any item that attained a response mean score of 2.50 and above was considered accepted, otherwise it was considered rejected. The z-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses formulated for the study.

RESULTS

The results, presented in line with the research questions and null hypotheses that guided the study, are presented on the tables below:

Table 1: The Mean Ratings of Responses of Teachers and Students on Personal and Professional Qualities Expected of Principals

S/N	Items	Teachers			Students		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	Attestable moral character.	3.18	0.72	SA	3.22	0.70	SA
2	Restraints even in the face of extreme provocation.	3.14	0.72	SA	3.17	0.70	SA
3	Good appearance, neat and well dressed.	3.09	0.77	SA	3.09	0.78	SA
4	Patent evidence of good health.	3.20	0.69	SA	3.21	0.72	SA
5	Ability to express self, both in speech and writing.	3.00	0.84	SA	2.96	0.87	A
6	Openness to suggestions from both friends and foes.	3.00	0.84	SA	3.02	0.84	SA
7	Competent in ways of ensuring discipline among staff.	2.67	1.11	A	3.72	0.95	SA
8	Ability to enforce disciplined learning.	2.98	0.86	A	2.92	0.90	A
9	Being interested in students' activities.	3.08	0.74	SA	3.02	0.82	SA
10	Ability to exercise patience with staff who perform below expectation.	3.18	0.66	SA	3.14	0.69	SA
11	Readiness to boost teachers' morale when dealing with staff and students.	3.17	0.70	SA	3.18	1.00	SA
12	Exhibiting non-authoritarian attitude when dealing with staff and students.	2.93	0.83	SA	2.90	0.92	A
13	Honesty in dealing with staff and students.	3.16	0.86	SA	3.15	0.79	SA
14	Attending to needs promptly and satisfactorily.	3.07	0.81	SA	3.03	0.84	SA
15	Having a strong desire to enhance the promotion of staff.	3.10	0.78	SA	3.08	0.80	SA
16	Regarding staff as colleagues or equals in the administrative process.	2.88	0.92	A	2.90	0.66	A
Cluster Mean		3.00	0.83	SA	3.10	0.84	SA

Source: Field Work

From the data presented on the above table, all the teachers and the students were of the opinion that certain factors were associated with personal and professional qualities of principals. All the 16 items in this cluster have mean scores well above the cut-off point of 2.50 on a four-point rating scale. The cluster means of 3.00 (for teachers) and 3.10 (for students) on a four-point rating scale are indicative of the fact that both the teachers and the students were of the opinion that the items in the cluster constitute factors associated with personal and professional qualities of secondary school principals.

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Responses of Teachers and Students on Desirable Qualities Expected Principals in Financial Management

S /N	Items	Teachers			Students		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
17	Evidence of prudence and ability to run an institution within budgetary limitation.	3.12	0.73	SA	3.1	0.75	SA
18	Ensuring that salaries and allowances get to them as soon as it is released.	3.2	0.98	SA	3.22	0.72	SA
19	Readiness to release money for the purchase of school equipment.	3.20	0.71	SA	3.22	0.72	SA
20	Supervise the school bursar rather than doing the work for him.	3.23	0.88	SA	3.18	0.73	SA
21	Accurate account to the supervising agency, Board of Governors and Parents' Association.	3.80	0.64	SA	3.03	0.88	SA
22	Making use of payment vouchers in all financial transactions	3.2	0.59	SA	3.29	0.62	SA
	Cluster Mean	3.29	0.75	SA	3.17	0.66	SA

Source: Field work

From the data presented above, the teachers and students are of the opinion that the qualities listed are some of the desirable qualities principals are expected to display in school financial management. All the six items in the cluster point to the fact that both the teachers and the students strongly agreed that these are financial qualities principals should possess in school financial management. All the items in the cluster have mean scores well above the cut-off point of 2.50 on a four point rating scale. The cluster means are 3.29 (for teachers) and 3.17 (for students) on a four-point rating scale which indicate that both the teachers and the students strongly share the view that these items are expected desirable qualities of principals in financial management.

Table 3: z-Test Analysis of the Difference between the Mean Ratings of the Responses of Teachers and Students with Regard to Personnel and Professional Qualities expected of Principals

Variables	\bar{X}	SD	n	Probability Level	Df	Z-Cal	Z-Table
Personnel and professional qualities of principals							
Teachers	3.00	0.83	600	0.05	778	1.2	1.96
Students	3.10	0.84	180				

From the table above, we can see that the calculated z-value is 1.2 at 778 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated z-value of 1.2 is less than the critical table value of 1.96, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the opinions of the teachers and students as regards personal and professional qualities expected of school principals in Enugu State.

Table 4: z-Test Analysis of Difference between the Mean Ratings of Teachers and Students Desirable Qualities Expected of Principals in Financial Management

Variables	\bar{X}	SD	n	Probability Level	Df	Z-Cal	Z-Table
Desirable qualities expected of principals in financial management							
Teachers	3.07	0.76	600	0.05	778	-0.48	1.96
Students	3.03	0.84	180				

The above table shows that the calculated z-value is – 0.48 at 778 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated z-value of -0.48 is less than the critical table value of 1.96, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. In other words, there is no significant difference between the opinions of teachers and students with regard to the desirable qualities expected of principals in financial management in Enugu State.

DISCUSSIONS

Research question one dealt with personnel and professional qualities expected of principals in the area of staff and student personnel administration. According to the respondents, staff and student like principals who exhibit attestable moral characters, who restraints even in the face of extreme provocation, are interested in students' activities, who exhibit non-authoritarian attitude when dealing with staff and students, who are honest in dealing with staff and students, who attend to staff needs promptly and satisfactorily, who have a strong desire to enhance the promotion of his staff, and who regard his staff as colleagues or equals in the administrative process. The findings agree with Mgbodile (2003), who observed that staff personnel administration forms the second cardinal leadership responsibility of the school administration in achieving the goals of the school. Staff personnel administration entails, among other things, assisting and promoting the general welfare of staff, stimulating the general welfare of staff stimulating and providing opportunities for professional growth of staff, and rewarding hardworking staff.

With reference to the second research question, which dealt with desirable qualities expected of principals in the area of financial management, the teachers and the students indicate that they like principals: who are prudent in financial management; who can run a school within budgetary limitations, principals who ensure that staff salaries and allowances are paid as at and when due, who are ready to release money for the purchase of school equipment, who supervise the school bursar rather than doing the job of the bursar, who render accurate and clear account, and principals who make use of payment vouchers in all financial transactions.

These findings confirm the view of Ogbonnaya (2003) who opined that financial management qualities expected of principals include: evidence of prudence and ability to run the institution within the budgetary limitation, readiness to release money for purchase of school equipment, and making use of payment vouchers in all financial transactions, among others.

Hypothesis 1 showed that there is no significant difference between the mean opinions of staff and students with regard to administrative qualities expected of principals in staff and student personnel administration. This implies that the null hypothesis is not rejected. Hypothesis 2 revealed that there is no significant difference between the opinions of teachers and students with regard to financial management qualities expected of principals. This implies that the null hypothesis is not rejected.

CONCLUSIONS

The desirable administrative qualities expected of principals include: possession of some admirable personal qualities such as attestable moral character, good sense of humour, discernable poise and emotional stability, restraint in the face of extreme provocation, among others. The findings of the study further revealed that qualitative principals are expected to possess competencies in prudence in financial matters and ability to run the institution within the budgetary limitation and making use of payment vouchers in all financial transactions. The findings show that qualities expected of principals are competencies in staff and student personnel administration which involve assisting and promoting the general welfare of staff, stimulating and providing opportunities for professional growth of staff, rewarding hard work, arranging for the continued assessment and interpretation of student results. Other expected qualities include competencies in financial management such as readiness to release money for the purchase of equipment, accounting for school monies and property, and supervising the school bursar rather than doing the work for him.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- School principals should be specifically trained for leadership position.
- Exposure of secondary school administrators to various seminars, workshops and symposia especially on leadership behaviours.
- Acquaintance of the school heads with the current educational administration journals, magazines and the modern techniques and information on school administration.
- A regular common forum to be organized for school principals to share and cross-pollinate ideas and experiences on effective school administration.
- Principals should receive special training in financial management with regard to school setting.
- Appointment of principals to be based on the years of experience, performance and qualifications of individuals and not on political inclination or geographical spread.
- School principals who excel in school administration should be rewarded by the community and government. This will go a long way in strengthening the principals who are lagging behind so that they may pick up and become effective principals.

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